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THE PREDICATES REAL AND UNREAL

IN the course of experience we find that the terms real and unreal are constantly applied to very diverse objects under a great variety of conditions. We say jewels, old masters, and money are unreal. We speak in like terms of moral qualities. The sympathy manifested by an enemy is unreal, that of a friend real. Again, the recantation of a Galileo is unreal, the conversion of a Newman real. Turning to science the same distinction is found. Color is not a true representation of reality, hallucinations are not real objects. The very procedure of a discipline itself is subject to the classification. This was not a real test, or that was not a real experiment, are phrases frequently used to characterize work in these fields. All sorts and conditions of objects are constantly being brought under these categories.

These illustrations show that the categories "real" and "unreal" are habitually used, and hence must have some definite connotation. Nor can they be considered as equivalent to "being" and "non-being." For in some sense, all the objects mentioned above *are*, no matter what their status in regard to being real is. Professor Sheldon, in the preceding paper, attempts to demolish the conception of unreality, pointing to the fact that we have relegated such ideas as substance, etc., to the sphere of outgrown superstitions. But what has actually occurred is that we have come to know what substance is in terms of experience. We have not done away with it, but learned to state what it signifies. Inasmuch as things are constantly being classed as real and unreal, the task of the philosopher consists, not in doing away with the distinction, but in determining just wherein the distinction resides.

In pursuing the task of determining what the terms mean in experience, we shall take as illustrations cases where they are used and others where they are not, and, by a method akin to induction, isolate the characteristics of the former. I go into a jeweler's shop and buy certain stones as diamonds. They are later proved to be glass. My former judgment that they were jewels has been shown to be false. Under these circumstances I pronounce the stones unreal. Yet in another sense they are real, *i. e.*, they are glass. Contrast this with the following instance. A certain chemical is presented to me for analysis. From its appearance I am inclined to believe it a calcium salt. But further testing shows that I was mistaken, and that my initial hypothesis was incorrect. But I do not on this basis judge the substance unreal. It is a compound of a different character from that anticipated, but not unreal. Or here is another pair of illustrations. A man has an hallucination. As soon as he perceives it to be such, he

immediately declares it to be unreal. But an alienist interested in the case would pronounce it real. On the other hand, in a fog what seemed at a distance to be a man turns out to be a tree. Still the tree is not unreal, but a tree. It was quite different with the hallucination, which not being the experience of a physical object, is unreal.

When we examine these instances we note a number of points.

1. In the first place the predicates real and unreal can both be applied to the same object at the same time from different points of view, or at different times from the same point of view. The hallucination is a reality to the physician, an unreality to the patient. The stones accept both universals. It is quite clear from this that the judgments are not made, owing to the fact that the objects possess any particular properties. As hallucinations and glass, things are hallucinations and glass and that is an end of it. The nature as such of the objects is not responsible for the judgments concerning their reality. Any kind of a thing may, on occasion, be described from this viewpoint. It follows, therefore, that Professor Sheldon's statement that reality is either being as such or being of a certain kind is invalid.

2. In all the illustrations cited, some claim to a particular nature was made. The stones masqueraded as diamonds, *i. e.*, the conditions under which they were bought, certain aspects of their appearance, etc., all led to their explicit assignment to that class. The hallucination, due to its sense vividness and what not, was looked upon as having the properties of a material object, *i. e.*, as offering resistance, displaying certain kinds of activity, etc. The supposed calcium sulphate made a claim to a certain status which was at least tentatively accepted. And the tree suggested a man. In all cases, the attempt to appropriate a specific character is made by the object.

This fact would lead nowhere unless the attempt to operate on this suggested belief were made. This calls either for action on this basis or for judgments which are then submitted to the process of verification. If these work out as expected, no judgments of reality or unreality are returned, provided there has been no doubt raised as to whether the initial assumptions were correct. The stones merely continue to be accepted as diamonds, and the chemical as a certain salt. If my judgments of their character are never challenged, I shall accept them for what they seem as long as my further activity is successful. Suppose, however, that my initial hypothesis is for some reason brought into question. This may happen for diverse reasons, the mere recognition on my part of the purely tentative nature of the idea being sufficient. Further investigation shows that the stones are not diamonds, and the substance not a calcium salt. Now the falsity of my initial judgment does not lead to the declaration that the objects of them are unreal. For while we do ascribe this predicate to

the pseudo-jewels, we merely declare that the compound possesses a different nature from the one claimed. It is barium, not calcium, but no question of reality or unreality is raised. Again, had the initial statements been substantiated, the diamonds would have been real, but under like conditions the calcium would have been calcium, not real.

It follows from the above that the truth or falsity of judgments based on the claims of objects to a certain status is not as such the basis of the predication of reality or unreality. The latter concerns the subject-matter of a judgment, while truth and falsity are properties of judgments. Judgments are true or false, while things are judged real or unreal. Nor are the two factors so related that any one-to-one correspondence can be set up.

3. Though the fact that the diamonds are unable to substantiate their pretensions does not *per se* lead to their being judged unreal, still it undoubtedly has something to do with the matter. What then is needed in addition if objects whose appearance has or has not been misleading, are to be dealt with in terms of reality. Returning to our illustrations, the great difference stands out as one of value. The diamonds are interesting to me only as diamonds. As glass they can not be worn, they are not a suitable gift, they are like countless other bits of stuff which I ignore. It is only in their rôle as precious stones that they appeal; it is only their apparent character that is of value. Their failure to meet expectations renders them matters of indifference to me. Bad money is unreal because it pretended to be a medium of exchange, and since it is not such my interest in it vanishes. Another way of putting the matter is to say that only as jewels or as specie could the objects be factors in guiding my actions. As glass and lead they no longer figure in the existing situation as items in my procedure. They are simply non-existent for my plans. My interest in them may be reawakened subsequently, they may later aid my purposes, but for the situation in which they were to have played a part they have become non-entities. The same holds true in the case of the hallucination, for, short of the status of physical object, it is a matter of indifference for my present actions what it is, a product of diseased sense organs or what not. But for the alienist, that it is an hallucination is the vital matter, and the maintenance of this character in the face of additional experience makes the predicate "real" applicable. If it had been a true perception, it would have fallen outside of his province and been valueless to him. But the sodium sulphate was not judged unreal, because the interest lay in the constitution of the body, and its seeming specific character was an hypothesis, the truth of which did not exhaust the values of the stuff. If it turns out to be calcium, well and good. If it turns out to be another element, well

and good. The particular character of the reaction which would have been forthcoming had it been the former will now be changed, but in its new rôle it is still a factor in the situation. I shall alter the reagent which I was about to add, etc.

We reach, then, the following conclusion as the result of the analysis given. When a thing makes claim, however tentatively, to a certain character, and is of value only in so far as it possesses that character, the validating of this claim will lead to its being judged real, the invalidating to its being judged unreal. On the other hand, provided this particular nature is not the exclusive point of interest, the result of the further testing does not lead to the raising of the question of reality one way or the other. The truth or falsity of the initial hypothesis is not as such responsible for the application of the additional predicates. The judgments were correct or incorrect, and that is all there is to it.

Another way of putting the matter is to say that reality and unreality are evaluative terms. This has two important results. In the first place, the old problem of being as usually conceived, is meaningless. The determination of the ultimate character of reality, the accepted task of the metaphysician, is a useless quest, for reality is nothing, has no character, but is merely a generic term for the fact that in experience many things are evaluated in a certain way, that certain value judgments take place. The distinction between appearance and reality as usually stated vanishes, for they are relative terms, not absolute. On the other hand, contrary to the opinion of Professor Sheldon, unreality can not be demolished. Like substance, it can merely be defined. Unreality in any absolute sense vanishes, for it should never have existed. But that things may have the value of being unreal, as they may have the value of being good or true, is proved by every-day experience.

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TELEOLOGY IN COSMIC EVOLUTION: A REPLY TO PROFESSOR WARREN

IN a recent essay¹ Professor Howard C. Warren has touched on the problem of fitness of the environment and, while analyzing what he takes to be the logical foundation of a belief in the teleology of inorganic nature, has associated with my writings certain arguments which he easily shows to be fallacious. His principal comment is to be found in the following lines: "There is, however, a fundamental

¹ This JOURNAL, Vol. XIII., pages 65, 66.